

COLORING
SHEET



Can you
identify
each
creature
in the
*Imaginary
Menagerie?*





Curriculum Ideas Based on *Imaginary Menagerie: A Book of Curious Creatures* by Julie Larios, illustrated by Julie Paschkis



Research the cultural origins of the mythical creatures found in *Imaginary Menagerie*. On a world map, have your students mark where stories about each creature are found.



Half of the creatures in *Imaginary Menagerie* can be found in the Harry Potter books. Can your students identify the seven creatures common to both? (Answer: *dragon, mermaid, centaur, troll, cockatrice or basilisk, hobgoblin or goblin, and phoenix*)



At the end of the dragon poem, readers are invited to fly on the dragon's back. Have your students write their own poems about the view from this perspective.



After reading the mermaid poem, have your students write their own poems with the mermaid as the speaker.



The sea serpent invites readers to dream about a night's swim with him. Have your students write their own poems about their adventure with the creature.



Notice that the thunderbird poem is *about* the mythical creature. Have your students write their own poems with the thunderbird as the speaker.



The phoenix bursts into flame and then rises from the ashes. Have your students write their own poems about the moment when the phoenix ignites.



What other imaginary creatures can your students write poems about? Make your own class book, *Imaginary Menagerie, Volume 2*, with poems and illustrations about the creatures listed below, or any others your students can think of. Research any that may be unfamiliar.

unicorn	cerberus	triton	jackalope	brownie	Cheshire cat	gnome
vampire	satyr	griffin	banshee	fairy	elf	genie



Study the illustrations in *Imaginary Menagerie*. Have your students pick a poem from the book and reillustrate it from a different perspective.



Notice the initial capital letters of each poem's title. Have your students create their own alphabet in this style of illustration.



Can You Identify These Curious Creatures from *Imaginary Menagerie*?

After reading the information about each creature at the back of the book, see if you can match the description to the name. (Close the book! No peeking!)

DESCRIPTIONS

WORDS TO MATCH TO

(Draw a line from the description to the correct name.)

1. Many cultures believed that these creatures tried to lure humans into the sea.
2. Ancient Greek mythology describes this bird as singing so beautifully that the sun stops in its journey across the sky to listen to her song.
3. Throughout the British Isles, these fairylike beings were said to carry lanterns through bogs and marshes to lure travelers who had lost their way in the dark.
4. Russian folklore holds that this bird's feathers are magic.
5. These creatures were accused of stealing human babies and substituting their own changelings to be raised by unsuspecting parents.
6. People told stories about these creatures to scare naughty children into behaving well.
7. Ancient Greeks said this creature's mother was a rain cloud, and its father was the sun.
8. Legend says the only way to kill this creature is to make it look into a mirror.
9. This creature almost always guarded access to something sacred.
10. Although these creatures are usually thought to be enormous, some cultures depict them as small as rabbits.

hobgoblins

trolls

will o' the wisp

dragon

sphinx

firebird

mermaid

phoenix

centaur

cockatrice



ANSWER KEY 1. mermaid 2. phoenix 3. will o' the wisp 4. firebird 5. trolls 6. hobgoblins 7. centaur 8. cockatrice 9. sphinx 10. dragon



Playing with Poetry

by Julie Larios

Author of the Poetry Collections *Imaginary Menagerie: A Book of Curious Creatures* and *Yellow Elephant: A Bright Bestiary*

Here's something I think many people don't know about poets: WE HAVE A LOT OF FUN WRITING POETRY! Of course, it takes hard work, too, like most things that are fun (think learning to play soccer or learning to paint or learning to play the flute). But poets love words, and they love the puzzle of trying to make interesting words fit into the scheme of rhyme and rhythm. If you love puzzles and wordplay and the *sound* of words as well as their meanings, you might just be a poet, too!

The tricky part is letting a poem play with sound and still making the poem mean something. So you take form (which is about sound and rhythm), and you take meaning (which is about what you think and feel), and you do your best to make those parts fit together like a wondrous little machine—all the springs and cogs and gears fitting together, nice and smooth. A good machine hums, and so does a good poem.

Here's a sound game I play with words. It helps me get the poetry machine humming, and I hope it will get yours humming, too. I call the game *morphing*, which means "changing shape." Choose a word—for now, let's make it the word *gold*—and by changing the way it sounds just slightly each time, turn it into the word *silver*. Change the word at least six times to get to your end word. Like this:

gold / goats / gates / gaze / graze / shave / shiver / silver

That took eight steps. The words that are next to each other don't really "rhyme" in a traditional way, but they do "chime," the way bells do (*ding-bing-bong-bang*), making different but similar sounds, which are often subtler and more interesting than noisy, attention-grabbing rhymes. You can play this sound game whenever you like, with a classroom full of friends, or by yourself in your room. And you can add to the challenge by creating a second step: Use all of your morphed words in a single poem! Use them wherever you like in the poem—don't worry about rhyming at the ends of lines. You might be surprised how your ear can hear the words chiming, as long as they're not too far apart. (Like bells, they can't be too far from each other to clearly sound alike.) Poems often have these chimes, called internal rhymes, that happen within a line. An even harder challenge, though, is to add a third step to the game: Make your morphed words be the end words of each line of your poem! Doing that is harder than you think—remember, you're going for meaning, too. The best poems come in at the ear *and* at the heart. They sing, but they sing a song that means something to you.

So remember this advice, which I'll put in the form of a poem:

Poems hum, they come
at you like bees over clover,
and Honey, they can even sting.
Poems ring, like bells, they can sing
Hallelujah or Hush-a-Bye or The Blues.
Like a silver flute, they want to flutter;
like a strong heart, they want to beat.
Ticktock. Poems rock.

